

Amendments to the claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of the claims

1-22. Canceled

23. (currently amended) A primer casing comprising a an elongate sleeve portion and a leading portion as integral components of a unitary piece and a loading hose engagement means, wherein the elongate sleeve portion defines a passage that is adapted to receive and encase a primer when the primer is slidably inserted into the passage, wherein the elongate sleeve portion ~~and~~ comprises a blasthole engagement means as an integral part of the sleeve portion, ~~and~~ wherein the leading portion comprises a nose cone which is provided at one end and as an extension of the sleeve portion, and wherein the loading hose engagement means comprises an extension at the end of the elongate sleeve portion remote from the nose cone.
24. (currently amended) A casing according to claim 23, wherein the elongate sleeve portion defines a passage that is adapted to receive and encase a primer is in the form of a cylindrical cartridge.
25. (currently amended) A casing according to claim 23 or 24, wherein the sleeve portion defines a cylindrical passage into which ~~the~~ a primer may be slidably inserted.
26. (currently amended) A casing according to claim 23, wherein the primer casing further comprises a primer retaining means that is adapted to retain a primer when slidably inserted into the elongate sleeve portion such that the sleeve portion encases the primer.
27. (original) A casing according claim 23, wherein the apex of the nose cone is rounded.
28. (currently amended) A casing according to claim 23, wherein the blasthole

- engagement means comprises a projection from the elongate sleeve portion.
29. (original) A casing according to claim 23, wherein the blasthole engagement means is moveable between a retracted position and a blasthole engagement position.
30. (original) A casing according to claim 29, wherein the blasthole engagement means is integral with the casing and attached thereto by a flexible hinge which enables movement between retracted and blasthole engagement positions.
31. (currently amended) A casing according to claim 29 or claim 30, wherein in the retracted position the blasthole engagement means abuts the elongate sleeve portion.
32. (original) A casing according to any of claims 29 to 31, wherein in the blasthole engagement position the projection is inclined outwardly relative to the primer casing and rearwardly relative to the leading portion.
33. (original) A casing according to any of claims 29 to 31, wherein the projection comprises at its end a blasthole wall engagement means.
- 34-35. (canceled)
36. (currently amended) A casing according to claim ~~35~~ 23, wherein the end of the sleeve portion remote from the nose cone is adapted to engage the end of ~~the a~~ a loading hose and has an internal dimension greater than the external dimension of the end of the loading hose.
37. (currently amended) A casing according to ~~claim 35 or~~ claim 36, further comprising means for preventing contact between ~~the a~~ a primer when encased by the sleeve portion and a loading hose when the loading hose is engaged by the sleeve portion.
38. (currently amended) A casing according to claim 23, comprising a number of apertures in the elongate sleeve portion.
39. (currently amended) A method of loading a blasthole, which method comprises the steps of inserting a primer into a primer casing as claimed in any of claims 23, 24,

26, 27, 28, 29, 30, ~~34, 35~~, or 36 and positioning the primer casing at a desired location in the blasthole using a loading hose.

40-41 (canceled)

42. (currently amended) A method of loading a blasthole, which method comprises the steps of inserting a primer into a primer casing as claimed in claim 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30 or 36, positioning the primer casing at a desire location in the blasthole using a loading hose, and charging the blasthole with bulk explosive.